

Select Board Joint with Warrant Committee, School Committee, Capital Budget Committee, Long Term
Capital Planning Committee

APPROVED BY
THE SELECT BOARD

April 25, 2022

April 11, 2022

Remote Meeting

7:00pm

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA

DATE: May 5, 2022
TIME: 2:45 PM

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Select Board was called to order by Chair Mark Paolillo. Vice Chair Adam Dash and Select Board member Roy Epstein were present, along with Town Administrator Patrice Garvin, Acting Assistant Town Administrator Glenn Clancy, Director of DPW Jay Marcotte and HR Director Shawna Healey.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Paolillo read the proclamation for National Telecommunications Week. The Town will dedicate the week of April 10 to April 16 as National Telecommunications Week to celebrate 911 professionals who work tirelessly as the first point of contact in all emergencies.

Motion was made to issue the proclamation. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Beech St. Center events:

- Museum of Fine Arts: Art in Bloom (virtual) will be held on April 12, 2022 at 11 am. Free event.
- Pysanky Ukrainian Easter Egg Painting Class will be held on April 14, 2022 from 11 am to 2 pm. \$30 fee.
- The War in Ukraine, a lecture presented by Dr. Alexandra Vacroux will be held on April 19, 2022 at 1:15 pm. Free Event.

Contact Dana Bickelman at the Beech St. Center to register for the above events at 617-993-2977.

- Final Fuel Tank Public Forum will be held remotely on April 29, 2022 at 7 pm.

COMMENTS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS

Rachel Heller asked if there will be comments accepted during the MBTA discussion. Paolillo replied that comments will be accepted.

ACTION BY CONSENT

Public Hearing on Grant of Location Petition from Verizon for Job #1A5UM9J – Statler Road

Russ Bilodeau from Verizon joined the group. Verizon is proposing to install 75 feet of new conduit on the corner of Channing and Statler Road to extend fiber services. Jay Marcotte reported that this request has been reviewed by the DPW. Bilodeau said that the job has not yet been scheduled but should be completed within the next month.

Rudy Montoya said he lives on Statler Road and he asked if Verizon will repair the curbing in front of 81 Statler Road? Bilodeau said that Verizon will repair any damaged curbing.

Motion was made to approve the grant of location petition from Verizon to place one new 4-inch conduit approximately 75 feet southwesterly from existing pole, P.9, located on the easterly side of Statler Road to existing hand hole, located on the westerly side of Statler Road. Applicant shall not damage the existing granite curbing and should damage occur applicant should replace and install same in kind.

OPEN JOINT MEETING

FY23 Budget Presentation Update

The School Committee, Warrant Committee, Capital Budget Committee and Long Term Capital Planning Committee joined the meeting.

Amy Checkoway, Chair, called the School Committee to order at 7:27 with a quorum.

Ann Marie Mahoney, Chair, called the Capital Budget Committee to order at 7:28 with a quorum.

Geoff Lubien, Chair, called the Warrant Committee to order at 7:31 pm with a quorum.

Chris Doyle, Chair, called the Long Term Capital Planning Committee to order at 7:33 with a quorum.

Patrice Garvin presented a slide presentation of the updated FY23 operating budget. The slides were updated to reflect changes made since the February 14, 2022 presentations. The budget does not include water and sewer enterprise funds.

- The total revenue estimate for FY23 is \$145.8M. Revenues include ARPA funds, general fund and free cash. This is a conservative estimate and they are still seeing COVID-19 impacts on fees. The budget proposes to include \$6.5M from free cash and \$440K from ARPA funds.
- The updated ARPA plan distribution proposes a \$2M allocation from ARPA for the FY23 Town Operating Budget and \$1M in ESSER match for FY23 School Budget which will be used for one-time positions in the schools. ARPA funds have to be spent by the end of calendar year 2024.
- The expenditure estimate for the FY23 general fund is \$145.8M. Expenditures include Town operating costs, education, fixed costs, free cash and ARPA funds. Since February, there was a reorganization of the Accounting Office, an increase in revenue and expenses in the Recreation Department, a health insurance rate decrease and an adjustment to the School budget. There is a 2.5% increase in the FY23 expenditures budget from FY22.
- Patrice confirmed that expenses and revenues are both down this year.
- The biggest reduction is in the school budget.
- ARPA money can be allocated by the Select Board without Town Meeting approval.

Paolillo confirmed that there will be additional input requested from boards/committees and the public on the ARPA allocations.

Supt. Phelan presented an updated presentation on the FY23 Public Schools general fund budget. He reported that since the February 16th joint meeting there has been considerable feedback from the public and other committees and this has resulted in a reduction in the overall budget of \$2.3M.

- The full budget book will be coming out in the next few weeks.

- Phelan showed a draft report of the budget reductions. He said they are not asking for general fund increases and are instead using circuit breaker state funds. Also there is a \$100k credit from the Lab Collaborative, and health insurance costs will decrease. Reductions of \$2.6M are estimated.
- Two budget options include:
 - Option 1: further reduce the general fund tuition line by \$200K, offset by circuit breaker state funds and retain the 6.2 FTE new positions (supported by School Committee). If all positions are retained, then the revised FY23 budget will have an estimated reduction from draft 1 budget of ~\$2.37K and an estimated increase of 1.3% from the FY22 budget. NOTE: The 6.2 FTE positions include behavior specialists in special education (2.0 FTE), math specialist and ELA teacher at Chenery (2.0 FTE), music teacher at Chenery (.2 FTE), High School Mental Health professional (1.0 FTE), and Monitor (1.0 FTE).
 - Option 2: retain 3.2 FTE new positions only. This option would reflect a reduction of \$2.5M from the draft 1 budget and an increase of 0.9% from FY22 budget.

COMMENTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS on the FY23 budget

Amy Checkoway, Chair of the School Committee, said the School Committee has been working diligently to reduce the school budget and they feel the new positions are necessary.

Supt. Phelan explained that the 13 positions were hired with the support of the School Committee in FY22 with one-year funds. Ann Helgen, Warrant Committee member, asked why incremental funds are needed if the new positions indicated were already in place in FY22. All the positions are being kept in place whether you get an increase in the budget or not.

Supt. Phelan said they are identifying these positions separately because the goal was to separate one time hires from recurring hires. He reported that the FY23 budget starting point did not include the 13 positions.

Ann Helgen said she would like to see the school budget include total number summaries. This would help to increase transparency. Helgen said that the school department has asked to add 46 positions since 2020 and 24 are permanent positions and she needs to see further explanation about why the new positions are still required.

Meg Moriarty, School Committee secretary, said they will work on addressing the issues raised by Ann Helgen.

Supt. Phelan agreed with Chair Paolillo that there may be need for further discussion about the FY23 budget with the Education Subcommittee.

Mike Crowley, School Committee member, said they have been going back and forth with the budget and he feels they have clarified questions that were asked earlier. He said the School Committee voted on Option #1 because they felt all 6.2 FTEs were important. There is serious concern about the mental health of our students. He said there were savings in other areas to help finance the new positions.

Paolillo said he would lean towards Option 2 with the chance there will be more funding in the future for the other positions. He would like to retain budget reserves because he is worried about the budget

in FY25. He said if we don't have override in FY25, then a number of positions would have to be terminated.

Jack Weis, Warrant Committee member, said that budget decisions cannot be made based solely on enrollment figures. We still need to address special needs and mental health. He thinks we need to cover these positions with general funds and circuit breaker funds, and deal with the future later.

Supt. Phelan also noted that there will be incremental additions necessary due to the new school.

Supt. Phelan said that his goal was to reduce the general fund items in his budget so that more money could be added to the Town's free cash. He said he recognizes that these general fund positions are being balanced by state funding, but he is trying to give students the help they need now.

Garvin said that in FY22 we are using free cash as one time revenue. It is challenging because the recurring revenues are not there.

Jeff Liberty, School Committee member, discussed sustainability in light of enrollment. It is likely that people who left the public schools had the financial means to do that and the result is that the school department is left with needier students. He feels there are long term costs of not addressing acute needs now. He also pointed out that we cannot always assume that a replacement position can be hired at a lower salary.

Catherine Bowen, School Committee member, agreed with Jeff's comments. We need to remember why we invest in the schools. She said our district is lean and there are so many programs we don't have, even with the lower enrollment.

Roy Epstein commented that the presentations should have been distributed in advance of the meeting to allow time to absorb the information. He added that it was difficult to see the budget amounts for the added positions funded with one-time money. The budget process should look ahead to include expected deficits in the next few years to make that part of the planning now.

Paolillo replied that as Chair, he will do a better job next time to make sure materials are received in a timely manner.

Ann Helgen, Warrant Committee member, said there really is an increase in the school budget of up to 6% not 1.3%. The general fund budget is reduced, but not the total budget. We are using funds accumulated because of OOD tuition and state funding.

Geoff Lubien, Chair of Warrant Committee, said he is willing to meet with a smaller group to develop a presentation that addresses the questions raised tonight and bring it to the Select Board for further discussion. The discussion will focus on acceptable limits on the general fund budget.

Meg Moriarty, Warrant Committee secretary, said that the School Committee should continue the discussion of the new positions. She thinks the School Committee gave Supt. Phelan direction to focus on the upcoming year only.

Jamal Saeh, School Committee member, said that steps and lanes could add \$1 to \$1.5 M which could affect level funding.

Ellen Schreiber, Warrant Committee member, asked that the School Committee review the comments made at the budget meeting in February to help with re-evaluation of the budget. She said there always seems to be a new set of questions every time the school budget is discussed and she feels there is a need for enhanced communication between committees.

Chris Doyle, Warrant Committee Vice-Chair and Long Term Capital Planning Chair, suggested that there needs to be a discussion about the increase in services.

Supt. Phelan said he can give more data about frequency of behavior. IEP and ELA costs have grown. He agrees that the case count and frequency of delivery could be better quantified.

Amy Checkoway, Chair of School Committee, said she is committed to working with a smaller group to find a way to present issues in a clearer way.

Tom Caputo, Warrant Committee member, said that there are lots of tradeoffs as we move forward, but acute needs have to be addressed. He thinks it would be a good idea to adopt a three-year focus.

Elizabeth Dionne, Warrant Committee secretary, said that we are operating in a very fragile environment. There will always be contentious people and we are going to have to justify the increase in head counts in a straightforward way. If we can't understand it, then the public will not be able to understand. The increases in the budget have to be justified in a simple and clear manner.

Laurie Slap, Warrant Committee member, suggested holding a financial summit in the Fall. There may be tough years ahead.

Paolillo agreed that a financial summit would help to clarify issues and establish more transparency.

PUBLIC COMMENTS on the FY23 budget

Mary Lewis, Town Meeting member, commented that there is not a one-on-one relationship between enrollment and needs. Children have been impacted by COVID issues. We need to work on a preventative approach. We have already cut many school programs and we don't have the same services that abutting towns have. We have been underfunding our schools for many years. She asked about the general stabilization fund? Garvin reported that the stabilization fund has a \$1.8M balance.

Amy Checkoway adjourned the School Committee with a roll call vote

Geoff Lubien adjourned the Warrant Committee with a roll call vote.

Ann Mahoney adjourned the Capital Budget Committee with a quorum.

Chris Doyle adjourned the Long Term Capital Budget Committee with a quorum.

CLOSE JOINT MEETING

Accept layout of Oakmont Lane

Glenn Clancy said that the Select Board needs to approve the layout of Oakmont Lane before Town Meeting can accept Oakmont as a public way. Clancy gave a history of the development of this road. It was previously owned by the Town, and in 2015, it was sold to a private developer. The developer had ownership rights to the road and he is now petitioning the Town for acceptance as a public way. The

roadway was completed in 2020 and it does not need any repairs. The residents do not need to approve the change from private to public.

Motion was made to accept Oakmont Lane as a public road. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Discussion on the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Communities Briefing

Robert Hummel, Senior planner, Belmont Office of Community Development, presented slides on the MBTA Community Zoning Requirements.

- As of January 1, 2020 a new section of Mass Law MGL c. 40A (section 3A) requires that MBTA communities have at least one multi-family housing zone of three units or more in their municipality. Non compliance will result in ineligibility for MassWorks, Housing Choice and Local Capital Projects funds. A final draft guidance will be issued by the state this summer.
- Hummel outlined the highlights of the current guidance. Belmont is required to zone for 2,175 units. A working group will be created to quantify how many units currently exist.
- The deadline for establishing zoning amendments that comply with this law is Dec. 31, 2023. The first step is to submit the MBTA Community Information Form to DHCD.

Steve Pinkerton, Chair of the Planning Board, said the deadline for compliance is soon and the working group needs to involve other Town departments. The working group may need to be selected by the Select Board. This is an opportunity to revitalize Waverly Square and other areas of the Town.

Epstein asked why Belmont is designated as a bus community when we have a commuter rail in Town. Hummel said the DHCD has determined that we are a bus community and there are other towns in a similar designation with commuter rails in their municipality.

Rachel Heller, Co-chair of the Belmont Housing Trust, said she is excited about the new multi-family zoning law. This new law dovetails with the Belmont housing production plan process. Creating more affordable homes, preserving open space, supporting local businesses is important and this zoning requirement may afford Belmont the opportunity to control the growth with successful planning. She is familiar with many technical assistance groups that can help with this endeavor.

PUBLIC COMMENTS on MBTA Community Zoning

Mark Kagan, Town Meeting member, agrees that the new zoning law is a great opportunity for the Town. He believes there is a way that we can comply with the law while retaining the character of the Town.

Joe Bernard, Town Meeting and Structural Change Impact member, said he did a lot of reading about this subject. The multi-family law is a legal requirement and may impact other state funding possibilities.

Vincent Stanton agreed that it is better that Belmont has a plan for development. Achieving 50 acres of multi-family housing may be challenging because of the size of our Town.

It was agreed that the immediate step is to form a working group and bring the issue back to the Select Board to determine subsequent steps.

Discussion and possible vote on recognizing "Juneteenth" as a Town of Belmont holiday

Shawna Healey reported that "Juneteenth" was adopted as a federal holiday last year. This year, Belmont will have to close our Town buildings on Monday, June 20th. Since we are currently in labor negotiations and the labor contract does not include this holiday, the Select Board needs to adopt the holiday so that the unions can vote to decide whether it will be a paid or unpaid holiday. The adoption of the holiday will add additional costs of \$32K for public safety positions. Other positions will not be affected because that day is already included in the budget.

Motion was made to make June 19th a Town of Belmont paid holiday effective June 19, 2022. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Discussion and possible vote on actions for the Shade Tree Committee:

a. Accept three resignations

Lucia Gates, Chair of the Belmont Shade Tree Committee, said a year ago, the Select Board recommended that the membership of the committee be changed from 12 to 7 members, but that change in charge was never formally voted. Also, after the recent resignation of members, the committee needs to appoint two new members to bring it back to the 7-member level.

Motion was made to accept the resignations of Jennifer Parker, Kathleen Gajdos and Caroline Hurwitch from the Shade Tree Committee. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

b. Appoint two committee members

Motion was made to appoint Vickie Amalfitano to the Shade Tree Committee with a term expiring June 30, 2023. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Motion was made to appoint Christine Arthur to the Shade Tree Committee with a term expiring June 30, 2022. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

c. Amend the Charge

Motion was made to amend the charge of the Shade Tree Committee to reflect the change in membership from 12 to 7 members. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Discussion and possible vote on request from Belmont Veterans Officer to hold annual Memorial Day Parade & Observation Ceremonies on Monday, May 30, 2022

Motion was made to approve the request from the Belmont Veterans Officer to hold annual Memorial Day Parade & Observation Ceremonies on Monday, May 30, 2022. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Possible vote to approve request for an Agricultural Wine permit for the House Bear Brewing, LLC to sell wine at the Belmont Farmer's Market, June 2, 2022 through October 27, 2022

Motion was made to approve the request for an Agricultural Wine permit for the House Bear Brewing, LLC to sell wine at the Belmont Farmer's Market, June 2, 2022 through October 27, 2022. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Possible vote to approve request for a one day liquor license (beer & wine only) to A. Cole for an event at the Beech Street Center on April 23, 2022 from 5:00 – 8:00 PM

Motion was made to grant approval for one day liquor license (beer & wine only) to A. Cole for an event at the Beech Street Center on April 23, 2022 from 5:00 – 8:00 PM. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Possible vote on future Select Board meeting dates, May – December, 2022

After reviewing the dates in the packet, it was agreed that the July 11, 2022 date would be changed to July 18, 2022. The Select Board noted that the Open Meetings Law will require a physical quorum after July 15, 2022 so approval of hybrid remote participation will be necessary before that date. Committee and board members will be required to have a physical quorum, but attendees can be virtual. They agreed that the Open Meetings Law discussion can be scheduled after Town Meeting.

Motion was made to accept the meeting schedule as amended. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

SELECT BOARD COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS

[NONE.]

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

a. April Bulletin

April Bulletin will be posted online tomorrow.

b. Staff Update

Bob Upton will be retiring as the Veteran's Service Agent. Nava Niv-Vogel will be retiring at the end of June from the COA. An offer is going out for the Assistant Town Administrator.

c. Appointment to Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council has requested an appointed or elected individual to sit on their board. If any elected or appointed person is interested, please contact Patrice Garvin. The notice will be posted on the Town website.

d. Awards Update

The Town received Mass. Cultural Council funding for \$7900, and the Belmont Fire Department received a grant of \$25K for their automated external defibrillator program.

e. Letter from Belmont Citizens Forum

The Community Path Project is currently undergoing a 25% design review from MassDOT. The next step is to secure the right of way. The Belmont Citizens Forum submitted a letter that states that their land will be donated at no cost to the Town. It was agreed that the letter should be posted for the public.

Garvin said that Town Meeting begins on May 2, 2022. She said her office will be providing info to the Town Meeting representatives and she wanted feedback from the Select Board about the letter. Select Board members agreed the letter in the packet could be distributed.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

a. April 4, 2022 – Regular Meeting

b. April 6, 2022 – Regular Meeting

Motion was made to accept the meeting minutes as amended. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Future agenda items:

- a. Transportation Advisory Committee recommendations on Concord Ave striping plan
- b. Position on Segment A – ATM Articles
- c. Structural Impact Group Report
- d. Bond issue with Treasurer's Office.

Next regular meeting is April 25, 2022 at 7 pm

Executive Sessions:

1) To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares; All Unions

2) Executive Session: To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual

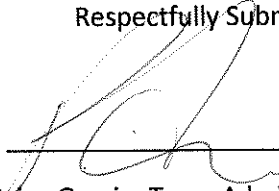
Motion was made to enter Executive Session and not return to public session. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Submitted by

Virginia Quinn

Recording Secretary

Respectfully Submitted by



Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator

